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Scrutiny of CIA Well Worth Time

Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy, D-Minn., has announced that during the forthcoming session of Congress he will seek creation of a nine member committee to make a full investigation of the Central Intelligence Agency.

We wish him well. But others—the new mayor of New York, John V. Lindsay, for one—have urged similar investigations and have gotten nowhere.

In fairness to the CIA, it must be noted its failures usually provide headline news, while its accomplishments never see the light of day. It's hard to believe the CIA hasn't enjoyed an occasional success, though its sterner critics are inclined to the opinion that its fiascos are legion, its achievements few. (It would be interesting to know whether President Sukarno's revised opinions about Indonesia's home grown Communist movement resulted from CIA activities among his military.)

What basically concerns Sen. McCarthy, however, is not a roster of CIA triumphs and defeats. Rather is his concern aimed at the agency's role in carrying out its functions.

"There is" said the senator in making known his intentions for the next session, "some evidence that the CIA has expanded its statutory purpose of correlation and

evaluation of intelligence to broader fields."

The senator fears—and well he should, on the evidence uncovered after the abortive Cuban effort and the Dominican Republic fiasco—that the CIA too often oversteps its bounds of authority. Thus, the CIA has not been content to gather intelligence, to evaluate it, and to act upon it in accordance with directives from the State Department. It has gone much further. It has indeed established policies and then proceeded to try and carry them out—a role never envisioned for the agency by Congress.

When the CIA takes upon itself to initiate and to implement policy, it is rendering a service beyond its prescribed duties and responsibilities.

World powers must have undercover organizations. Nevertheless, these organizations cannot act unilaterally. They cannot be sovereign. They must be subordinate to higher authority.

This doesn't mean they can't be asked to undertake cloak and dagger missions. It means such missions must be agreed to and ordered from above. The CIA is an adjunct of government, not THE government.

If Sen. McCarthy can get his nine-man commission, and if it, in turn, can impress upon the CIA that to be effective the latter's role depends upon the agency's leaders' and operatives' willingness to cooperate with and to remain obedient to higher authority, the senator will have performed an invaluable service in behalf of the nation.